

The Gospel of St. Mark

Session 4: May 21, 2025

Mark 6:1–6 — Jesus Rejected at Nazareth

- Jesus teaches in the synagogue of His hometown—Nazareth—but is met with skepticism.
 - The townspeople question His authority because they knew His background as a carpenter.
 - “A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown...”
 - Their unbelief limits the work He could do there, not due to lack of power, but hardness of heart.
 - Jesus marvels at their unbelief.
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Mark 6:7–13 — The Sending of the Twelve

- Jesus sends the disciples out two by two, giving them authority over unclean spirits.
 - They are instructed to travel light—no food, no money—depending on hospitality.
 - If a town rejects them, they are to shake the dust off their feet as a judgment sign.
 - Their mission includes preaching repentance, healing the sick, and casting out demons.
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Mark 6:14–29 — The Death of John the Baptist

- Herod hears of Jesus and believes He may be John the Baptist raised from the dead.
 - Flashback: John had rebuked Herod for his unlawful marriage to Herodias and was imprisoned.
 - At Herod’s banquet, Herodias’ daughter dances and, prompted by her mother, asks for John’s head.
 - Herod, though distressed, agrees out of fear of losing face.
 - John is executed—a prophet silenced, and a forerunner martyred.
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Mark 6:30–44 — Feeding of the Five Thousand

- The disciples return and Jesus leads them to rest, but crowds follow.
 - Jesus has compassion—they are like *sheep without a shepherd*—and teaches them.
 - Faced with their hunger, Jesus challenges the disciples: “*You give them something to eat.*”
 - With five loaves and two fish, He feeds the multitude—all eat and are satisfied.
 - Twelve baskets of leftovers remain—symbolic of provision for all Israel.
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Mark 6:45–52 — Jesus Walks on Water

- Jesus sends the disciples ahead by boat while He prays on the mountain.
 - They struggle against wind at sea; Jesus comes to them walking on the water.
 - “*He meant to pass by them*” recalls God’s glory passing by Moses (Exodus 33).
 - They think He is a ghost—He says, “*Take heart; it is I (egō eimi).*”
 - Their hearts remain hardened, not understanding the loaves.
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Mark 6:53–56 — Healings in Gennesaret

- Jesus is recognized immediately in Gennesaret.
 - Crowds bring the sick to Him wherever He goes.
 - People beg to touch the fringe of His garment, and all who touch are healed.
 - Contrasts strongly with His rejection in Nazareth—here He is welcomed and trusted.
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Mark 7:1–23 — Clean and Unclean / The Heart of Defilement

- Pharisees accuse Jesus’ disciples of eating with unwashed hands, violating tradition.
 - Jesus rebukes them: “*You leave the commandment of God and hold to human tradition.*”
 - He exposes their misuse of Corban—dedicating money to avoid caring for parents.
 - Jesus declares all foods clean and teaches that defilement comes from within, not from food.
 - The true source of uncleanness is the human heart.
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Mark 7:24–30 — The Syrophenician Woman’s Faith

- Jesus enters Gentile territory (Tyre); a Gentile woman begs for her daughter’s healing.
 - Jesus uses a children-and-dogs metaphor—Gentiles after Jews.
 - She replies: “*Even the dogs eat the crumbs...*”—showing humble, persistent faith.
 - Jesus commends her and heals her daughter—faith crosses ethnic and religious barriers.
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Mark 7:31–37 — Healing the Deaf and Mute Man

- In the Decapolis, people bring a man who is deaf and has a speech impediment.
- Jesus takes him aside privately, touches his ears and tongue, and says “*Ephphatha*” (“Be opened”).
- The man is instantly healed; the crowd is astonished beyond measure.
- Jesus requests silence, but His fame continues to spread.